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DEMOCRATIC

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HITLER WENT — HIS JUDGES STAY

374 Nazi Judges and Prosecutors Run Adenauers Courts

A total of 374 men. who today occupy leading situations in the West German judicial system, as judges or public prosecutors, held similar posts in nazi special courts, it was disclosed in Berlin on October 14th.

This frightening total, backed by unimpeachable documentary evidence, only touches the fringe of the problem of the renazification of West German justice, said a spokesman of the Committee for German Unity in Berlin which has assembled the evidence. The actual number of old nazi judges and public prosecutors now serving the West German state is certainly much higher, but so far hard evidence has only been sifted with regard to the 374 men named in a series of lists published by the Committee.

It is important to emphasise that these judges are not simply men who sat in judgment on normal civil or criminal cases during the nazi regime: every single one of them served in Hitler's "Special Courts" or "People's Courts", which were established with the sole object of dealing with offences against the nazi state, ranging from the distribution of anti-fascist leaflets and the organisation of resistance groups to telling jokes about hitler.

The personal files of most of these judges and public prosecutors are now in the hands of the East German authorities, and they prove without the shadow of a doubt that the 374 men so far named were implicated in passing 820 death sentences on Germans, Poles, Czechs and others during the nazi period.

Here are few examples, taken at random from the material on the subject prepared by the Committee for German Unity:

1. Dr Bruchhaus

Today Dr Bruchhaus is public prosecutor in Wuppertal, West Germany. During the Hitler period he worked as public prosecutor in Hitler's "People's Court". On April 20th 1943 he conducted the prosecution of Walter Richey, a German emigrant in Belgium, who had provided forged papers for 15 Jews in Belgium to save them from the nazis. Richey was sentenced to death.

On July 23rd he prosecuted Dr Alois Geiger, himself a member of the nazi party, who had told one of his patients that Germany had lost the war. Dr Geiger was sentenced to death.

On September 28th 1943 he prosecuted the Social Democratic worker August Beckman, his wife Lina, and another married couple on charges of listening to the BBC. All four were sentenced to death.

2. Dr Gfroerer

Today Dr Gfroerer is a judge in West Berlin. During the war he served as judge in a nazi "Special Court" in Berlin. On January 3rd 1945 he passed sentence of death on bookkeeper Leo Juessen from Stettin, who had told his landlady "Stettin will be pounded to rubble: the Russians are on the way, they will soon reach Stettin."

3. Dr Makart

Today Dr Makart is director of the Administrative Court in Cologne. During the war he was judge in Hitler's "People's Court". On February 8th 1944 he sentenced the worker August Ulrich to death for picking up a leaflet dropped from an RAF plane, and showing it to fellow workers in his factory.

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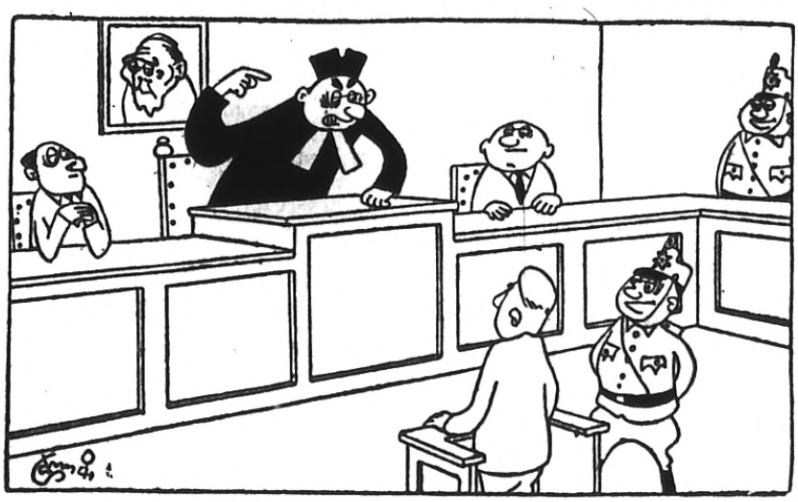
THE SAME MAN — THE SAME IDEAS



West German Judge: "Distributing peace leaflets, eh? I had to sentence your father to death for the same offence in 1942. Can't you learn the lessons of history?"

("Berliner Zeitung", East Berlin)

(cont. from preceding page)

On August 10th 1944 he sentenced Social Democrat Gustav Huesing to death for passing on news he had heard on the BBC.

On February 15th 1945 he passed sentence of death on butcher Paul Hinze, who had supplied members of an illegal Communist resistance group with food.

4. Dr Muhs

Today Dr Muhs is a district court judge in Hamm, West Germany. During the war he was judge at a nazi "Special Court" in Radom, occupied Poland. On June 25th 1943 he passed sentence of death on the Pole Bazyli Antoniak for saving two Jewish children from the liquidated Radom ghetto and hiding them in his house.

On April 4th 1944 he sentenced the Pole Wladyslaw Tyczynski to death for saving a Jewish child from the Glinice ghetto.

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Those are only four examples of the inhuman sentences demanded by these public prosecutors and passed by these judges, all of whom are back in office, prosecuting cases and passing sentences in West Germany and West Berlin today.

In September this year British journalist Sefton Delmer, of the London "Daily Express" took the trouble of interviewing one of these judges, Dr Herbert Keyser, a judge in the Leipzig "Special Court" during the nazi period, who is now judge of civil appeals in Stuttgart, West Germany. This is what Sefton Delmer was able to report in the "Daily Express" on September 16th:

". . . Dr Keyser not only did not attempt to dispute the sentences he had been responsible for on the terror tribunals, but was ready to stand by them almost with an air of defiance. 'I do not regret a single one of the sentences for which I was responsible as a member of the special tribunal' said Dr Keyser . . . 'Did they know your past as a member of the Special Courts here?' I asked him. 'Of course' he answered, 'All my papers and personal files are deposited with the authorities here. I have nothing to hide'."

It is perhaps worth recording what the Potsdam Agreement had to say on the subject of nazi judges:

"The judicial system will be reorganised in accordance with the principles of democracy, of justice under law, and of equal rights for all citizens without distinction of race, nationality or religion."

They are fine sentiments: but in West Germany today these excellent principles are left in the hands of Hitler's judges.

Judge Scandal — Full Details

Full details of the past records of the 374 nazi judges and prosecutors have been published by the Committee for German Unity in English and German. Readers who want the full details should apply to GERMAN REPORT, specifying whether they want the English or the German edition.

NAZI JUDGES — M. P.s QUERY

The problem of the old nazi judges now back in office in West Germany was raised in the British House of Commons on July 10th 1957. Here is the report on the question circulated by Reuters News Agency:

Selwyn Lloyd, Foreign Secretary, was questioned in the House of Commons yesterday about allegations that former nazi judges were being employed as judges and public prosecutors in West Germany.

Sidney Silverman (Labour) asked if Lloyd was aware that contrary to the Potsdam Agreements about 200 persons employed as judges or public prosecutors were "personally concerned as judges in the infliction of death and other heavy sentences for offences against the Nuremberg and other nazi laws".

He asked what consultations Lloyd had had about the matter with the other parties to the Potsdam Agreements, and what representations he had made to the German Federal Government.

Lloyd said: "I am aware that allegations of this nature have been made recently, apparently originating in East Germany. I am informed that the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany have already initiated an investigation into these allegations. In the circumstances I think it would be inapproriate for me to comment further at this stage."

Silverman asked him to keep the matter in mind and report to the Commons when he had seen the result of the investigation.

Lloyd replied: "Since May 5th 1955 the appointment of judges is a matter falling within the full jurisdiction of the Federal German Government and the Governments of the German Laender. Nevertheless, I can assure you that we retain an interest in this matter and that we shall follow it up."

More than three months have passed since this answer was given. There has been no sign from Bonn that the West German Government is actually investigating the case of the nazi judges.

It is high time that Mr. Selwyn Lloyd should be jogged into following the matter up as he promised.

Visitor's Book

Dr Kamal Moustafa Khalil, Egyptian Minister of Transport, arrived in the German Democratic Republic on October 11th to study transport problems and their solution here.

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Seven members of the Japanese Socialist Party, headed by Tesu Katayama, former Prime Minister, arrived in Berlin on October 15th for a tour of the German Democratic Republic. In the course of discussions with leading politicians of the Democratic Republic the Japanese Socialists expressed their support for the diplomatic recognition of both German states by Japan, and the creation of a German confederation by the two German states.

YUGOSLAVIA & THE TWO GERMANYS

Relations With Berlin: Bonn Breaks Ties

The German Democratic Republic and the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia announced on October 15th that they had established normal diplomatic relations.

The West German Government reacted four days later with the almost unprecedented step of breaking off diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia. In modern German history the breach of diplomatic relations has invariably been followed by war.

The official communiqué on the assumption of diplomatic relations between Democratic Germany and Yugoslavia, published simultaneously in Berlin and Belgrade, announced that this step had been taken following an exchange of letters between Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl and President Josip Broz-Tito.

All socialist countries now maintain normal relations with Democratic Germany. Other states which have extended de facto recognition to the German Democratic Republic through the conclusion of trade pacts or the exchange of official trade missions are Finland, Egypt, India, Syria, Burma and Indonesia.

Official government circles in Belgrade and Berlin emphasised that the establishment of diplomatic relations was a normal and logical step, since the governments of the two countries were in agreement on all important international questions. A Yugoslav spokesman stated that his government recognised the fact that two states exist today in Germany, and believed that recognition of the German Democratic Republic would help to improve contacts between the two German states: German reunification could obviously only be achieved by means of such contacts, he said.

In Bonn on October 19th, West German Foreign Minister von Brentano announced that it had been decided to break off relations with Yugoslavia since that country's recognition of the German Democratic Republic "was an unfriendly act directed against the vital interests of the German people". By recognising Democratic Germany, Yugoslavia had "intervened in internal German affairs", von Brentano stated.

Yugoslavia reacted very sharply to the breach of diplomatic relations by the West German Government. The Yugoslav Foreign Ministry described the West German action as "unilateral and arbitrary", and as a "crass attempt to force upon our country a policy opposed to the interests of peace."

Commenting on the West German step, the Belgrade Communist organ "Borba" stated: "In the past two generations we have experienced two German wars of aggression: this is now the third attempt to rob us of our rights as an independent state. The methods used by the Bonn Government are all too reminiscent of those used by Hitler's Third Reich."

SPECULATORS, SPIES, SWINDLERS LOST MILLIONS

Speculators, tax-evaders, spy organisations and other underworld elements in East and West Germany lost hundreds of millions of marks on October 13th, when Democratic Germany, in a surprise move, suddenly called in old banknotes and issued new.

No reliable estimates of total underworld losses were available in Berlin when GERMAN REPORT went to press, but western estimates went as high as 1000 million marks — nearly 250 million dollars.

The banknote switch, one of East Germany's best-kept state secrets, was suddenly announced at 8 a. m. on Sunday morning, October 13th, when Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl went on the air over all East German radio stations to announce the move. He announced that the measure would affect only actual cash held by the population, and that all bank deposits, etc., would not be affected. The change-over had been decided upon, he stated, because "monopolists and militarists in West Germany have accumulated in their possession certain quantities of our bank notes, in order to speculate with them, to organise upsets in our economy, and to finance spy organisations.

"All of you know that for a long period dark elements, utilising an artifical and spurious rate of exchange, have exported goods from the German Democratic Republic, and thereby enriched themselves.

"It therefore lies in the interests of the citizens of the German Democratic Republic that these banknotes, held by West German and West Berlin capitalist circles and spy organisations, should be made worthless."

Between 12 noon and 10 p. m. on Sunday, special exchange offices were opened at which every citizen of the German Democratic Republic could change up to 300 marks worth of old notes for new notes. Persons in possession of more than 300 marks in cash had to pay the excess into a special account, and they were entitled to withdraw this money on October 19th if there was no reason to suppose that the excess currency derived from speculation or other underground channels.

It was expected in Berlin that apart from wiping out at one stroke the East Germany currency held in West Berlin and West Germany the new measure would expose the activities of East German citizens who had engaged in large scale smuggling operations, or who had kept big sums in cash at home in order to avoid tax payments on commercial transactions.

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In view of misleading reports in western newspapiers that claimed that "savings over 300 marks had been wiped out", it is necessary to emphasise that the banknote change-over was in no way a currency reform. After the change-over everybody had exactly the same amount of money in the new notes as before the exchange, except in the case of those persons who could give no satisfactory account of how they came into possession of large sums of cash.

The change-over can best be compared to the measure taken by the Bank of England during the war, when old five pound notes were called in and replaced by new ones to prevent misuse by the nazis of large stocks of these notes which they had captured, and others which they had forged.

Democratic Germany's blow at the speculators led to lively scenes in West Berlin, particularly at the Zoo railway station, traditional black-market centre. Throughout Sunday hundreds of speculators milled here, offering East German currency at give-away prices in an attempt to cut their losses. To prevent the last-minute smuggling of currency from West to East Berlin, most crossing points between the two halves of the city were closed or closely controlled all day Sunday, and a large number of persons were apprehended carrying sums running into thousands of marks across the border line.

(For further details on the big money swap, see this week's Berlin Notebook on the back page of this issue.)

W. GERMAN STRIKE BAN MOVE

"Taff Vale" Case in Hamburg

West German trade unions have virtually been deprived of the right to strike by a court decision handed down by the Hamburg District Court on October 15th.

The court decided that a trade union was responsible for the full sum lost by employers in the case of a strike called by the union. The judgment, which is being appealed by the engineering trade union, would mean the bankrupting of any union daring to call a strike, and therefore is equivalent to a complete prohibition of industrial action by the workers.

The case, reminiscent of the notorious "Taff Vale decision" in Britain in 1901 (for details of this decision, see footnote) was a result of the big engineering strike in Schleswig Holstein which lasted from October 1956 until February 1957. Employers claim that the strike cost them about 300 million marks (over 25 million pounds sterling), and they are attempting to make the West German Engineering Trade Union responsible for this sum.

In a test case, heard before the Hamburg District Court, employers claimed the relatively small sum of 13,000 marks as "partial compensation" from the union for damages resulting from the strike. Following the court decision in favour of the employers, further claims, which may amount to hundreds of millions of marks, payment of which would bankrupt the union, are expected to be filed.

The employers based their claim on the allegation that the engineering union conducted strike ballots in the factories while a conciliation committee was still sitting on the worker claims for improved conditions. The court ruled that this action was a breach of contract between the union and the employers, that the strike was therefore illegal, and that the union was therefore fully responsible for the employers' losses.

(The "Taff Vale decision" of 1901 was a turning point in British labour history. For some years the then Conservative Government had been attempting to whittle away fundamental trade union rights won in the preceding decades: the climax of the campaign was the Taff Vale decision, in which the Taff Vale Railway Company won 20,000 pounds damages against the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants for losses sustained during a strike. This action, crippling the trade unions, forced them into political activity, and was a main factor in the formation of the British Labour Party as it exists today. Working class pressure forced the newly-elected Liberal Government in 1906 to pass legislation reversing the Taff Vale decision.)

Democratic Germany Europe's Second in Coal, Electric Production

Democratic Germany is today the second country in Europe in its production per head of the population of coal and electricity, detailed figures published in Berlin show. First country in Europe in per capita production of these commodities is Britain.

The figures for the production of electricity for 1955, the last year for which full figures are available, show that Britain produced 1732 kilowatt hours per head of the population; the German Democratic Republic produced 1595 kilowatt hours per head, and West Germany 1457 kilowatt hours per head. Other European countries follow in this order: Belgium (1272), Czechoslovakia (1155) and France (1131).

In the calorific value of coal produced, Democratic Germany also takes the second place. The German Democratic Republic leads the world in actual tonnage of coal produced, but the main part of this tonnage is in soft coal or lignite, which has a calorific value (heating power) only one third that of hard coal. Expressed in terms of hard coal heating value, production per capita in the main European producer countries for 1955 was as follows: Britain 4.4 tons; Democratic Germany 3.8 tons; Poland 3.5 tons; Belgium 3.4 tons; West Germany 3 tons and Czechoslovakia 2.7 tons.

WHO'S WHO IN NEW BONN PARLIAMENT

Nazis and Their Fellow-Travellers in Majority

On this and the following page we present short biographical details on a few dozen of the members of the newly elected West German Parliament. A preliminary survey shows that at least half of the members of Chancellor Adenauer's parliamentary coalition parties were either members of the nazi party, nazi officers during the war, lawyers who served the Hitlerite state, or businessmen who did very well out of the war, at least so long as the nazis were winning. Research on other members of the West German parliament is still in progress, and it is hoped to print a further installment of this "Who's Who" in an early issue.

Abbreviations

CDU = Christian Democratic Union, Chancellor Adenauer's party.

DP = German Party.

FDP = Free Democratic Party.

ADENAUER, Konrad

Chancellor, CDU. After First World War intrigued for separatist Rhineland State. In 1929, as Lord Mayor of Cologne, cabled Mussolini "Your name will be entered in the book of history in golden letters". Nazi authorities retired him, but paid his full pension. During the nazi period "he did not worry. He pottered about in his garden, and tended his roses" stated American official newspaper "Neue Zeitung". Opinion: "Our aim is to liberate our brothers and sisters in the eastern territories" (Speech on September 7th 1953).

•

BARZEL, Rainer

CDU (new member). 1941—1945 Luftwaffe officer.

•

BERENDSEN, Fritz

CDU. Leading executive of Kloeckner Steel Concern, which made huge war profits from nazi arms contracts. Professional soldier 1923—1945. Served as colonel on nazi general staff.

•

BESOLD, Dr. Anton

CDU (new member). Practised law during the Hitler period. Nazi officer 1940—1945. Left Bavarian Party on grounds that "the Christian-conservative kernel of the Party has been squeezed dry; the liberal tendency now dominates". Joined CDU 1955.

•

BISMARCK, Prince Otto von

CDU. Part owner of banking house "Schacht und Ludwig" run by Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's financial wizard. 1936 Embassy Counsellor at German Embassy in London; January 1937 to spring 1940 Director of political section of nazi Foreign Ministry; Minister attached to German Embassy in Rome until August 1943.

•

BLANK, Theodor

CDU. First West German Defence Minister (1953—55), initiator of new West German Wehrmacht. Served throughout war as lieutenant in Hitler's army.

•

BLUECHER, Franz

DP, Deputy Chancellor 1949—57. From 1938—1945 director of bank in Essen owned by war criminal Friedrich Flick. Opinion: "Every single one of us must give his full moral support to German soldierliness, which is nothing more nor less than a moral conception." (German Soldiers' Calendar" 1955).

Playing the new Parliament in
("Deutsche Woche", Munich)

•

BRENTANO, Heinrich von

CDU, Foreign Minister. Served as lawyer in nazi courts throughout Hitler period.

•

BURGEMEISTER, Alfred

CDU, retired colonel. Joined army 1926; 1934 regular officer, 1938 War Academy in Berlin. 1939—1942 General Staff officer. From June 1942 commanded infantry regiment on eastern front and Balkans. At present deputy chairman of the Helmstedt branch of German Soldiers' Association.

•

CONRING, Hermann

CDU. During the Second World War nazi governor of the province of Groningen, occupied Holland. On May 3rd 1943, Conring called in SS troops to deal with Dutch strikers, then reported to headquarters: "The police forces which we used fulfilled their duties in an exemplary fashion ... 23 persons were shot dead and 13 wounded."

•

DITTRICH, Stefan

CDU. Served as lawyer in nazi courts throughout the Hitler period. Nazi officer 1939—1945, decorated by Hitler with Knight's Cross of Iron Cross for services on eastern front.

•

DRESBACH, August

CDU. Worked as departmental editor on nazi newspapers 1933—1943. 1944 deputy chief of Gau Chamber of Commerce, Cologne-Aachen.

•

ENGELBRECHT-GREVE, Ernst

CDU. Nazi major with service on eastern and western fronts.

•

ETZEL, Franz

CDU. 1931 to 1933 youth leader in German National Folk Party. Practised law during the nazi period. Nazi officer 1939—1945.

EULER, August Martin

FDP. August 1939 legal adviser to IG Farben and general administrator of the Berlin chemical branch (this branch produced Zyklon poison gas used for murdering millions in nazi concentration camps).

•

FEURY, Baron Freiherr von

CDU (new member), landowner. During the Hitler period was director of the foreign department of Bavarian Vereinsbank.

•

HELLWIG, Fritz

CDU. Director of German Industrial Institute in Cologne. 1940 to 1943 director of south-western department of Economic Group of Iron Industries, nazi armaments organisation.

•

HEYE, Hellmuth Guido Alexander

CDU. Retired Admiral. Naval officer in both world wars lastly as commander of heavy cruiser "Admiral Hipper".

•

HOECHERL, Hermann

CDU. 1938 nazi public prosecutor in Regensburg. 1940 to 1945 nazi officer.

•

JAEGER, Richard

CDU. Served as judge during Hitler period. 1939—1945 nazi officer.

•

JORDAN, Pascual

CDU. (New member) Professor, atom specialist. Said in 1943: "This war, whatever the other side may hope as to its outcome, has brought one decisive result: the parliamentary-democratic idea is dead". 1947 Professor in Hamburg. 1957 violently opposed to the stand taken by eighteen West German scientists against atomic war. Opinion: "Epochs and countries distinguished by great achievements, advanced culture and splendid life are those in which the inequality of man, distinctions and divisions (often hereditary) between the classes have been particularly clearly marked..." ("Hannoversche Presse", September 14/15th 1957).

•

KRAFT, Waldemar

CDU, Minister without Portfolio 1953—1956. Major of black-uniformed SS, with membership number 347,148. Before war was leader of extreme German nationalistic organisation of "German Peasants in Poland", which helped prepare way for German invasion in 1939. Interned by British as dangerous nazi 1945—1947.

•

KEMPFLER, Dr. Fritz

CDU (new member). Member of Nazi Party from 1932, SS colonel. Appointed Lord Mayor of Bayreuth 1938. Interned by Americans in 1945 as major war criminal, tried by German court in 1947 for responsibility for anti-Jewish excesses in Bayreuth when Lord Mayor and for acting as Gestapo agent, but acquitted.

•

MANTEUFFEL-SZOEGE, Baron Georg

CDU. Former big landowner in eastern Poland. Opinion: "Germany has a mission in the western world to provide the trinity of military force, the new order in economy and the moral forces". (Parliamentary debate February 24th 1955).

•

MEERKATZ, Hans Joachim von

DP. Till 1945 director of the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin, centre of nazi spy activity in Latin America. Minister of Justice 1956—1957. Opinion: "We have gambled with the inheritance of our grandfathers. Now we must win back what Bismarck and others won" (Parliamentary debate February 24th 1955).

•

MEYERS, Dr. Franz

CDU (new member). Practised law in Moenchen-Gladbach during the nazi period.

•

OBERLAENDER, Theodor

CDU. Joined Nazi Party 1933, storm troop major. In 1939 was appointed Reich Leader of Federation of Germans in the East, attached to Gauleiter of East Prussia. Opinion: "The expulsion of Germans from the German eastern territories has cancelled all German war crimes; we are morally absolutely quits." (Speech in Kassel, November 24th 1954).

•

PREUSKER, Viktor Emmanuel

DP. Housing Minister 1953—1957. Joined black-uniformed SS 1933. Was SS instructor on "racial questions" and "aryanisation expert" for the Dresdner Bank. In 1939 received special diploma from the bank for his work "in freeing German economy from the Jewish yoke".

•

SCHAEFFER, Fritz

CDU. Minister of Finance 1953—1957. Opinion: "Adolf Hitler is the renovator of the Reich" (Regensburger Anzeiger, May 4th 1933). Removed from office in Bavaria in September 1945 by American authorities who stated: "Schaeffer must be regarded as nazi sympathiser and nazi collaborator".

•

SCHMIDT, Dr. Otto

CDU (new member). Prosecutor in Wuppertal provincial and district court during the nazi period.

•

SCHLEE, Albrecht

CDU (new member). Lawyer in upper provincial court circuit Bamberg during the nazi period. Now provincial court councillor in Bayreuth.

•

SCHNEIDER, Herbert

DP. 1935 volunteered for Luftwaffe. 1937 promoted to officer. Iron Cross First and Second Class. Served as Captain in Supreme Luftwaffe Command.

•

SCHROEDER, Gerhard

CDU. Minister of the Interior 1953—1957. Joined brown-shirted SA in 1933. Opinion: "The Federal Republic is the core of Germany. ... other German territory i land which has been stolen from us, and which we must regain." (Industriekurier, Dusseldorf, June 13th 1953).

•

SCHULTZ, Rudolf

FDP (new member). Big landowner. Major in the nazi Wehrmacht. Decorated by Hitler with the Knight's Cross. Has been Vice-Chairman of Rhine-Hessen Farmers' Union continuously since 1935.

•

SEEBOHM, Hans-Christoph

DP. Transport Minister. Chairman of Federation of Lower Saxony Foundry Owners, Opinions: "European culture can only be found where Germans live." (Public meeting in Rudesheim, August 9th 1952). "The German East... includes not only the Elbe and the Oder, but also Bohemia and all areas in which Germans once settled." ("Offene Worte zum Zeitgeschehen", Cologne, August 2nd 1953).

•

TOBABEN-AHLERSTEDT, Peter

DP (new member). Landowner, nazi officer 1939—1945.

•

WEINKAMM, Otto

CDU (new member). Practised as lawyer during the Hitler period. 1942—1945 nazi officer.

After Adenauer's Victory

By Gordon Schaffer, London

Adenauer's sweeping victory in the West German elections means that for a good many years ahead, the idea of a united Germany is out of the political picture. There is no present basis on which the two German republics can get together to discuss joint action. The election also puts out of the political picture any hope that may have been cherished in the West that Poland would move further from Moscow and nearer Washington.

To the West, the most striking feature of recent West German developments has been the tremendous economic upsurge — "Das Deutsche Wunder", with its threat of ever-fiercer competition in the markets of the world. But to the East, the most significant news from the Federal Republic in West Germany has been about the steady return to power of generals and judges, industrialists and arms manufacturers and a host of others who unrepentantly admit and even boast of their prominence in the Hitler regime.

The countries in the East which were ravaged and tortured by the Nazis now look on Germany rather as we in the West would have done in 1938 if an area of the Third Reich as big as the present German Democratic Republic (East Germany) had broken away from Hitler and declared its solidarity with Republican Spain. They certainly do not desire to see a united Germany on the Bonn pattern. They are not impressed by talk of "free elections" when they know that big business, which put a levy on coal to pay for Hitler's election fund, financed Adenauer with equal liberality. They regard the German Democratic Republic — and particularly its acceptance of the present German-Polish frontiers — as their protection against an aggressive German army on their borders.

When the new Parliament begins to meet in Bonn, there will be a greater measure of defiance of Western opinion, as well as intensified propaganda against the East. One amazing feature of the German situation is the naive believe of the Americans and the British that the West German leaders are grateful to them. Actually, they regard their Western allies as fools who fought the wrong war, executed leaders who, apart from a few minor mistakes, were fighting for "Christian civilization", and who now need German generals and soldiers to organize their defense. They are perfectly aware that with the help of U.S. dollars and machines they have won the peace and that their mark can now dictate to the pound and the franc. There are plenty of powerful people in Bonn who would be willing to try to drag the West into a "limited" war to regain their lost territories.

All these facts are known in East Germany — even if they are ignored in Washington and London and overshadowed by other problems in Paris. What does that signify for the future?

Bonn will be made aware that the whole strength of the whole socialist bloc will be behind the German Democratic Republic in its effort to compete in living standards with the Federal Republic.

The Western powers will be forced to understand that any constructive approach to the problems of Europe must be based on recognition of the existence of two German Republics.

I have just returned from a visit to Leipzig Fair, the trade showpiece of East Germany. The autumn fair deals mainly with consumer goods and light industry. Heavy machinery is shown at the Spring Fair. Buyers came from all over the world and in particular from such "neutral" countries as Finland, India, Egypt, Sudan.

East Germany is producing goods which can compete in quality, production schedule and price with anything from the capitalist world. She is receiving in return from customers in the socialist world most of her raw material needs. You can walk around the shops and see Chinese, Soviet, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Albanian produce and you realize the possibilities of integrating a highly skilled and specialized industrial economy with countries rich in raw materials. But she is getting into western markets as well.

Living conditions in the GDR have improved considerably in the last year. The continuance of rationing at low prices of butter, meat and sugar is not a sign of continuing scarcity but a method of assuring a minimum of these foodstuffs to the lower-paid families. There is plenty more on sale at higher prices. By Western standards, rents, utilities and transport are ridiculously cheap in terms of average income. Industrial goods and clothing are much more expensive and, except for the highest-priced samples, clothing is not up to Western standards. Welfare services for the children and the sick are ahead of many Western countries.

The effect is to provide a welfare state economy with a very low standard but out of the reach of real poverty.

There is still plenty of grumbling in East Germany, but the people can see improvement in industry and agriculture reflecting itself in their daily lives.

One East German problem is the lower productivity per head compared with West Germany. Visitors from West Germany are amazed at the leisurely pace in the factories. The East Germans say frankly it cannot be improved by discipline but only by the development of socialist understanding.

There are still too many restrictions on life and until they are removed there will be dissatisfaction; but the authorities point to the millions of dollars spent in attempts to disrupt their country, much of it from the middle of their territory — in West Berlin.

("National Guardian", New York, Sept. 30th)

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

On another page of this issue we bring you the news of the bank-note exchange carried out in the German Democratic Republic on October 13th. I find it is always a little bit difficult to explain a currency reform or bank-note exchange to people in Britain or America, which have not experienced any such operation at least within living memory, and probably much longer. In fact, if my memory serves me correctly the last comparable operation was carried out in Britain about the time of Henry VIII: some Americans experienced something of the sort in the 1860's when Confederate currency was cancelled.

But nearly every country on the continent of Europe has been through the mill in some form or other since World War Two, and my work as foreign correspondent has made me witness of six or seven such operations.

Now most of these change-overs were proper currency reforms: old currency in the various countries, which had become inflated for a variety of reasons, mostly connected with the war and nazi occupation, was called in, and replaced by new currency. In all these reforms new money was issued instead of the old: people paid in strictly prescribed sums of old money, and received a fixed fraction of its face value in new, firmly based currency. The rate for the change-over was determined by the degree to which the old currency had become inflated: in both halves of Germany, for instance, in the separate currency reforms in 1948, people received one new mark for ten old marks; in Hungary, where inflation had reached galactic levels, one new forint was issued in July 1946 for 400,000 quadrillion pengoes (we have not the space to write this out in full: it is a figure four, followed by 29 zeroes).

In all cases of genuine currency reform, the physical change-over of the paper money in circulation is accompanied by a freezing and radical cutting of all bank accounts, savings accounts, and so on. And in all the currency reforms which I have had to witness, the operation, however necessary it may have been, has entailed very real suffering and hardship for ordinary people, workers with their small life savings in the bank and so on.

And naturally, ordinary people are then sad. They are of course glad to get new stable banknotes in their next pay packet, but nearly everyone has at least a small post office savings account to mourn over.

And this was the great contrast with the bank-note switch which was carried out in the German Democratic Republic on October 13th. It must be clearly emphasised that it was not a currency reform, and that no bank accounts were blocked or cut: the only inconvenience which it entailed was that people had to queue up for a couple of hours on a Sunday to get their banknotes changed.

The only people who lost on the deal were speculators and tax swindlers who had large quantities of cash in their possession for which they can give no satisfactory accounting. The banknote exchange meant that they either had to declare their ill-gotten gains, and take the possible consequences, or sit quietly at home and watch their piles of banknotes turn into worthless waste-paper as the clock struck eight p. m., the hour when the old banknotes ceased to be legal tender.

And the knowledge that a few thousand people who had been living at the cost of the community on black market operations and illegal speculation were having a nasty time did a great deal to keep up the spirits of the millions of law-abiding citizens who were queueing up to change the banknotes which they had earned by honest labour.

This feeling of quiet pleasure at the discomfiture of the "wide boys" who had made a living at the expense of the community was particularly marked in East Berlin, which has suffered for so long under the unnatural and unhealthy situation of the city. Tens of millions of East German marks had flowed through various channels into the hands of manipulators in West Berlin: some of it was used for various complicated smuggling transactions, another not inconsiderable part had been used for various subversive activities directed by American, West German and other sabotage and spy organisations; and now, by the stroke of a pen, all this money had been rendered valueless.

On the subject of the espionage activities directed against East Germany, which have of course been mainly financed with the East German marks illegally accumulated in West Berlin, there was an interesting and revealing note in the West Berlin newspaper "Tagesspiegel" on October 15th. Here is the paragraph:

"Political circles in Bonn and Berlin are deeply disappointed that all official and semi-official institutions which normally concern themselves thoroughly with the situation in the Soviet Zone have shown themselves failures in connection with the date of the currency exchange. Members of the Federal Cabinet yesterday made no secret of the fact that millions of marks of public money had obviously been wasted completely uselessly."

This slightly muddy passage of prose, if translated into clear text, means: "We spend millions on maintaining big spy services ("official and semi-official institutions" is a charming phrase for the cloak-and-dagger boys, ed.) and they are not even able to give us advance information on a top-secret financial operation by the East Government so that we can unload our black-market East Marks."

* * *

In a recent Notebook I had reason to have a bit of a bash at the British Broadcasting Corporation for its rather childish non-cooperation with the East German radio service on the subject of relaying a running commentary on the recent soccer match in Cardiff between the teams of the German Democratic Republic and Wales.

Now I am glad to be able to report a case of cooperation, for a change. The story, which comes from reader Philip Stein in Glasgow, runs as follows:

"The East German boxing team who fought in Glasgow this week discovered, on unpacking, they had broken their record of their national anthem.

"A phone call S.O.S. to the B.B.C. in Glasgow set the wheels in motion.

"With one hour to spare before the contest with Scotland began, two records with the anthem arrived from the B.B.C.

"Then calamity . . . with only ten minutes to go it was found the records were too big for the record-player in the stadium.

"A second S.O.S. to the B.B.C. engineer rigging up the television equipment produced a suitable record-player, and all was well, with minutes to spare."

Just as a footnote, I can only hope that sports teams from the Democratic Republic will in future carry the national anthem with them on unbreakable long-playing records.

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